

STATEMENT OF SUE MASICA, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, REGARDING H.R. 1972, A BILL TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY TO DETERMINE THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF INCLUDING IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM CERTAIN SITES IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE, RELATING TO THE BATTLE OF FRANKLIN.

SEPTEMBER 29, 2005

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1972, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to study the suitability and feasibility of designating sites relating to the Battle of Franklin in Williamson County, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 1972 with an amendment that would conform the bill to similar study bills. On June 28, 2005 the Department testified in support of S. 955, a similar bill, with an amendment. While the Department supports the authorization of this study, we also believe that any funding requested should be directed toward completing previously authorized studies. Currently, 30 studies are in progress, and we hope to complete and transmit 15 to Congress by the end of 2005. We estimate the total cost of this study to be \$250,000.

H.R. 1972 would direct the Secretary to complete a study on the suitability and feasibility of designating sites relating to the Battle of Franklin as a unit of the National Park

System. The Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864, was a pivotal turning point of the Civil War.

After the fall of Atlanta in the summer of 1864, General John Bell Hood, commander of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, attempted to draw Union General William Tecumseh Sherman northward by threatening the Union supply line to Chattanooga. Hood sought to move the war out of Georgia in an effort to reclaim lost Confederate territory, most importantly Nashville. Sherman followed Hood for only a short time, deciding to turn his attention back towards Georgia where he would soon embark on his “March to the Sea.” In his stead, Sherman detached George H. Thomas and the Army of the Cumberland to protect Tennessee against Hood’s advance.

In November 1864, Hood pressed forward into Tennessee and confronted a Union force under the command of Major General John M. Schofield at Spring Hill. After several skirmishes there, Hood immediately followed Schofield to the small town of Franklin, which had been a Federal military post since the fall of Nashville in early 1862. At Franklin, Schofield positioned most of his 28,000 men behind extensive breastworks covering more than two miles of mostly open fields. Late in the afternoon on November 30, Hood, with an army of 18,000, hastily ordered a frontal assault against the well-positioned Union forces. After five hours of fierce fighting, much of it after dark, the Union army soundly defeated Hood’s army which suffered 6,261 casualties, including the loss of 12 generals and 54 regimental commanders. Among those killed was General Patrick Cleburne, considered by many historians to be the Confederacy’s top battlefield

commander. The Union's casualties numbered 2,326. With his army largely intact, Schofield ordered a nighttime withdrawal of Union forces to Nashville.

Although the Battle of Franklin was a major setback for the Confederates, Hood wasted little time, advancing his remaining forces to Nashville where on December 15 and 16, 1864, the Union Army of the Cumberland under Thomas swept Hood's army from the field, essentially putting an end to the war in Tennessee.

In its 1993 report, the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission identified the site of the 1864 Battle of Franklin as a "Class A" battlefield, representing a high level of military importance. The commission reported that the site represents an area that had a decisive impact on a military campaign and a direct impact on the course of the war. The commission also reported that the Franklin battlefield is currently a fragmented site with very little historical integrity remaining from the battle period.

There are many sites in and around the city of Franklin and nearby areas in Tennessee that have an association with the battle. Perhaps most prominent among these are the many buildings that served as field hospitals to treat the wounded and dying such as the Carter House, which served as the Union army headquarters during the battle and was later used as a field hospital. The house and outbuildings were purchased by the State of Tennessee in 1951, were opened to the public in 1953, and have been designated a National Historic Landmark. The scars of war are visibly apparent as the buildings still show more than a thousand bullet holes from the battle.

We suggest one amendment in section 4 of the bill to require the study to be completed three years after funding is made available, rather than three years after enactment. This will make the bill consistent with similar study bills.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

Proposed Amendment

H.R. 1972, Franklin National Battlefield Study Act

On page 3, lines 5-6, strike “Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act” and insert “Not later than 3 years after the date funds are made available for the study.”